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26 May 2021

Robert Jones  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Jones

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Rednal Hill Junior School**

Following my visit to your school on 5 May 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

**Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.**

The school should take further action to:

- develop leadership in foundation curriculum subjects so that it is as effective as that seen in English, mathematics and science
- ensure that subject leaders are clear about pupils' starting points in Year 3 in order to build on pupils' prior knowledge.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection, a deputy headteacher has left the school. In January 2020, you appointed two current members of staff as assistant headteachers. A new science leader was appointed in September 2020. You have recently appointed three new subject leaders in geography, history and physical education (PE).

There has been some disruption to your plans for school improvement during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the autumn term, a number of class 'bubbles' had to learn remotely from home. This meant that you had to adjust the way in which the curriculum was taught. During the spring term 2021, further adaptations had to be made to the curriculum while most pupils learned remotely.

Training for staff was affected in the summer term 2020 because of national restrictions and emerging school needs around remote learning. School improvement training was able to resume more fully during the autumn term.

## **Main findings**

Leaders have prioritised their efforts in improving the curriculum in English, mathematics and science. Improvements in these areas are making a difference. You have strengthened the leadership of these subjects and ensured that staff receive regular training to improve their subject knowledge.

Leadership of mathematics has become a strength of the school. You have put in place regular training for staff, alongside a coaching and mentoring programme for new teachers to improve their classroom practice. Leaders have looked to develop curriculum links beyond the school. Leaders have worked closely with the local infant school to share curriculum ideas and provide training to staff. You also run a mathematics research group in the local area to help support teachers in other schools.

Pupils are benefiting from an improved curriculum in mathematics. Leaders have put in place an effective curriculum that clearly builds and develops pupils' knowledge over time. This is helping pupils to retain knowledge long term. Teachers check effectively what pupils have learned and remembered. Teachers act swiftly to address errors and misconceptions. Since the summer term, leaders have put in place a same-day mathematics intervention programme to help those pupils who require additional support.

Leaders have also improved teachers' subject knowledge in science. Staff have received science-subject training from an external consultant, and there is an increased approach to working scientifically in lessons. Pupils in Year 6 were keen to share their enjoyment of the new science curriculum and how lessons now involve more practical activities.

There are clear improvements in the science curriculum. Leaders have thought carefully about the order in which topics are taught and how pupils revisit what they have learned previously. Teachers make better use of assessment by checking what key knowledge pupils can remember and their understanding of how to work scientifically.

Leaders in mathematics and science are aware that some curriculum content was missed during the spring term when the school was closed to most pupils. They have therefore adapted curriculum plans for the summer term to focus on the key knowledge that needs to be learned and remembered. Curriculum plans have already been adjusted for the next academic year to take account of what topics were missed or not taught in full.

You recognise that leadership of the wider curriculum needs to be strengthened. Some work on this has already started with your recent appointments in geography, history and PE. More work is required in order for the strength of leadership across the rest of the curriculum matches that seen in English, mathematics and science.

There is still work to do in order to improve the curriculum in foundation subjects. Leaders have put in place medium-term plans for geography and history. However, plans in other subjects are not sufficiently refined to make it clear how topics are sequenced so that pupils are able to know and remember more. Leaders also recognise that more work is required to ensure that the Year 3 curriculum builds on the prior knowledge pupils have when they arrive at the school.

Most pupils were not having lessons in music or modern foreign languages at the time of the inspection. This is because leaders took the decision to use this additional time to provide catch-up in the core subjects. Leaders plan to reintroduce these subjects from September 2021.

Leaders have ensured that reading continues to improve since the last inspection. Books have been carefully mapped to each year group so that they make connections with other curriculum subjects and become progressively more challenging. Pupils can read a variety of fiction, non-fiction and poetry texts through the English curriculum to broaden their knowledge and understanding. Leaders have implemented an effective system of 'reading characters' to help support pupils with their comprehension of a text. These characters are used regularly in lessons and in discussion with pupils about what they are reading.

There is a clear system in place to support those pupils who enter the school below the expected standard in reading. A phonics intervention programme is used to help improve pupils' reading and this is carefully tracked and monitored to ensure that pupils continue to improve.

The governing body is highly knowledgeable and has a strong understanding of the school and its improvement journey. Governors recognise the work that has taken

place to improve English, mathematics and science, but also know there is further work needed to improve the wider curriculum. Governors provide effective challenge and support to leaders. This was particularly the case during the pandemic around remote learning and changes to the curriculum. Governors are aware of their statutory duties and have a strong oversight of safeguarding at the school.

### **Additional support**

Leaders have benefited from external support commissioned by the local authority. A local headteacher has worked closely with leaders to improve the curriculum, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Further work is planned to help develop the wider curriculum, for instance in history and geography. There are also plans to share good practice using a collaboration model with a local secondary school for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders and pupils. I also held meetings with representatives of those responsible for governance and a representative of the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection.

I also looked at curriculum plans and information on the school's website. I evaluated responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 39 free-text responses, and 27 staff questionnaires.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Howes  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**